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ABSTRACT

By use of interviews, questionnaires, and observation, the courses and programs offered by the University Center for Adult Education, in Detroit, were evaluated. The courses concerned Communication and Language Art, Environment, Practical Economics, Behavioral Science, Technology, Extension Courses, and Special Events. Evaluation findings show that the Center has failed to some degree in not directing its attention to courses that are job-oriented or problem solving. It is recommended that more energy be expended on the lower echelons of the population rather than on the upper or middle echelons. An additional recommendation is that a one or two days' orientation program for teachers of adults be planned. (DB)

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EVALUATION OF COURSES AND PROGRAMS

OFFERED

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY AND
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
AT
THE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR ADULT EDUCATION
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

BY

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I. Introduction

In this foreward to the 1970 Fall Catalogue of programs of University Centre for Adult Education Mr. Milton R. Stern, the Director of the Centre, said,

> "The UCAE student who enrolls in "Civilization" or "American Radical Movement" or "Contemporary African Politics" will have embarked on an unexpected journey. He will be exploring past, present and future in the light of the changing values of our time."
>
> "This is the way we see ourselves; Education, including adult education, is derivative of society and as a social institution reflects the changes therein. When change is rapid, education is even more in flux than is the law, the church or the military. We are, and empathatically should be, sensitive barometers of change."

Our UCAE purposes are implicit in the program of non-degree courses and programs contained in this catalog of catholic range of subject matter expressed with a high order of originality, seeking to respond to needs of mature men and women in Detroit--and with a major emphasis on the contemporary situation. The tone of this catalog is of the 1970's: The problems dealt with are now relating to emerging themes of race, Women's Lib., ecology, community control of schools. To us, these are not only fashionable, they are important. The UCAE program is varied, eclectic, practical, visionary, but most of all, it is contemporary."

There is no doubt that a lot is implicit in the above paragraphs which would appeal to any sensible or reasonable man of any class--upper upper or lower lower, hence the general purpose of this evaluation is, inter alia, to assess the effectiveness of the programs enumerated above, i.e., to examine what segments of the population are affected by the program. Specifically, the objectives of this Evaluation exercise are:

II. Objectives of Evaluation

"For every event there is always a cause" says an old adage, hence the specific purpose or objectives for this evaluation exercise may be stated briefly as follows:

A. To find out which categories of courses are being affected at the University Center for Adult Education in the city of Detroit;

B. To examine the relevancy or otherwise of the courses to the solution of social, economic, political or racial problems within the City of Detroit;

C. To examine the segments of the population which utilize the courses offered;

D. To examine whether the courses were designed for the segments of population that are utilizing them and/or whether the segments should in fact be catered for, etc.;

E. To determine the scales of preferences used in arriving at the segments of the population to be served by the programs;

F. To discover the bases for selecting the programs: whether the programs were [illegible] only by ability to pay or need for the programs;

G. To examine the up-to-dateness or otherwise of the courses so offered

H. To find out what changes have occurred as a result of the courses or programs offered;

I. To discover whether or not the well-worded objectives stipulated are being fulfilled;

J. To determine the reasons for special successes and/or failures;

K. To uncover the principles underlying a successful program;

L. To examine the type and/or qualifications of instructors who participate in teaching the courses, etc.

III. Methods of Evaluation Used:

In order to be highly objective and come up with reliable results which may be validated by other means of evaluation, the undermentioned methods were used:

A. By selecting a small sample of the population of Detroit and interviewing them personally and/or by means of questionnaires;

B. By using autobiographical materials written by the Center;

C. By observing the behaviors of a few participants met at the Center;

D. By tape recording of participants responses when interviewed

E. By use of graphic records of performance skills of participants [this were intended to be done but the time was against the proposal].

IV. List of Courses Offered by Categories (Spring 1971):

The courses offered at the Center were grouped into seven categories in this exercise as follows:

A. Communication and Language Art

1. Humanities

(a) Literature;

(b) Philosophy;

(c) Music;

2. Communications

(a) Reading-Writing efficiency;

(b) Public Relations;

(c) Theater, e.g., impersonation: how to do it

(d) Films, concerts, plays and lectures

3. Foreign Languages

(a) French,

(b) Italian,

(c) Spanish

4. Contemporary Culture

(a) Evolution, Social Revolution and Human growth;

(b) Sexual Politics & Human Truth;

(c) Witchcraft, Black Magic & Modern Occultisms,

(d) Pornography, Privacy & the Law

(e) American Affairs & World Events

(f) Contemporary African Politics;

5. The Arts

(a) Art History;

(b) Studio Art;

(c) Photography,

(d) Painting.

B. Environment

1. Ecology-Astronomy-Radiation-Minerology

2. Home and Garden

C. Practical Economics:

1. Practical Economics-

2. Insurance Study:

(a) Chartered Life underwriters;

(b) Insurance Institute of America;

(c) Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters.

D. Behavioral Science Institute

1. Behavioral Science;

2. Psychology;

3. Behavioral Science Applications in Supervision

E. Technology:

1. Computers-

2. Construction Engineering

3. Industrial Engineering

F. Credit Courses which are given in the Center under the auspices of University Extension Services in Rackham Building;these courses do not come directly under the souvelance of the UCAE:

1. Center for Graduate Study Courses,

2. Undergraduate courses.

3. For people who cannot attend courses regularly.

G. Special Events

1. Famous Films of Famous Directors;

2. Friday Night Lecture Series;

3. The Stanley Quartet;

4. Detroit Premieres;

5. Travel;

6. The Center Associates Lectures;

7. Michigan Poetry Circuit, etc.

V. Problems in Detroit Identified:

A. In order to identify the problems in the City of Detroit, the following means were employed:

1. Reading of the past and current copies of Detroit newspapers such as Detroit Free Press, & Detroit Daily;
2. By means of interviews and tape recording responses of a sample of the population of Detroit;
3. By interview police officers in Detroit
4. The idea of using records of court cases was muted but was shelved for lack of time.

B. The Problems identified include:

1. Need for Health Programs;
2. Political Grievances
   (a) racial discrimination;
   (b) economic deprivation, etc.
3. Family problems-
   (a) family break-ups;
   (b) divorce rates;
4. Need for civic education;
5. Need for basic education;
6. Juvenile Deliquency, hence youth education or organization
7. Crimes:
   (a) breaking & stealing;
   (b) killing, arson;
   (c) alcoholism;
   (d) drug use,

8. Need for vocational and technical education
9. Negligent/useless driving-hence need for safety and driver education;
10. Unemployment due to lack of appropriate and relevant education, lack of task-related education, e.g., gas attendant education.

VI. Evaluation of Courses/Programs: Course Objectives:

A. In a report written by the Associate Director which was allowed to be read, Dr. Robert Smith stated how in July, 1970 the University of Michigan and Wayne State University formally renewed their agreement to cooperate in sponsoring the UCAE, i.e. after the Eastern Michigan University had severed its connection with the center and concentrated on Community Problems in its immediate environs.

Eight general objectives reinstated include the following:

1. To conduct non-credit educational programs;
2. To assist other institutions to do the same;
3. To offer leadership in the field of adult education
4. To use mass communications media appropriately;
5. To involve other campus units in both universities;
6. To encourage research in continuing education;
7. To make some impacts on community problems;
8. To conduct experimental programs.

As memtioned by Dr. Smith the broad change does not lend itself readily to accountability and evaluation but it is appropriate to the reach of the sponsoring universities and flexible enough to permit effective response to the opportunities and challenges facing continuing education.

The report describes programs and appraises performance in several major areas of activities; however, from the responses of interviews conducted, the Center does not seem realistic in some of its objectives-rather vague as the courses were designed mainly for the middle class people-this further confirms the

saying that, "those who have shall continue to have more and from those who have not shall be taken the little they have." According to Dr. Carl Brahce's explanation in a lecture he gave recently, 40% of students of the UCAE in Detroit were college graduates, 29% had their masters degrees, while only 13% of the students were high school graduates while the remaining 18% were of various qualifications.

Dr. Carl Brahce's study found about 47% of UCAE's students were between 30 and 49 years old, with roughly equal numbers or percentages above and below that spread. 56% of them were female, 60% claim to hold higher education degrees. 4% did not finish high school. When asked why they enrolled in a course, 43% said "to be better informed." The second choice "job advancement" was listed 17% of the respondents.[2]

Dr. Smith's demographic data roughly paralled Dr. Brahce's. Most of the courses listed for Fall 1971 were not really practical in the sense that they were mostly irrelevant to the solution of the problems facing Detroit; for instance, none of the courses were directed to reducing crime waves or directed to improving the morals and/or civic education or political education of the youth and/or racists. There were no attempts to give courses, say in gasoline station attendance, or some similar little things that matter in a society. Besides, there have been no recorded occasion when the Center sponsored or encouraged the slogan "Keep Detroit Clean", or providing task-oriented related courses, etc. These sorts of duties should figure prominently in UCAE

[2]Dr. Smith report of 1971

programs which are non-degree courses but community problem-solving courses.

In spite of the above observations, a good portion of UCAE's course programs and special events might well be called Community service activities. For instance, participation in Detroit Adventure was one such activity. The Detroit Public Schools were ordered by the State legislature to "decentralize". UCAE then arranged a series of public briefings employing experienced persons from New York and Washington and involving key persons from the schools of Detroit. Secondly, the ATTAC (Area Training & Technical Assistance Center) was funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity to train local Community Action Program Personnel throughout Michigan.

At times over 20 full-time teachers taught courses on Community organization, counseling and Guidance, Management, Para-professional training, human relations skills and various technical subjects. Over 30,000 persons, according to Dr. Smith's report, received instruction during the time. Thirdly, several smaller contracts were completed during the past five years. They included a training project for the Girls Scouts, reading courses for the Ford Motor Company and the City of Detroit, planning seminars for Community leaders in Oakland County, and administrative training project for the Department of Labor, and executive development for Monroe Auto Equipment Company. They included also contract programs with governments, firms, etc., e.g., there was a 10 week course for Federal government to train some people for specific kinds of jobs-administrative, etc.

B. Planning of Courses

As far as planning of courses goes, the questions of whether the clienteles were involved and/or whether they participated in the planning of the courses or programs or whether they had the opportunity to modify

or reject the programs and/or whether they were happy with the programs, were asked. The responses showed that the participants or students and/or the communities were not involved in planning programs of courses for them as such, but past or current students were requested to make suggestions for courses and programs on ad-hoc basis-not on formal basis. A lot is based on informal feedback from past students. Specifically, the planning of programs is based on: (i) contemporary matters that arise to the surface-issues of society-as exploited by staff of the Center in their dealing with the community; e.g., drug use, women liberation, aging, youth protests, wire tapping.

(ii) Staff capability and interest (staff who want a place to try new ideas, or as a way of contributing to the work of the Center, or even for staff who do so for the sake of extra money they got there from;

(iii) requests from communities, firms, governments and/or institutions;

(iv) capability of universities' resources, e.g., plants and gardening courses because the UM has Botanical Gardens, Art Courses make use of Museum in the premises.

(v) available money from the two sponsoring universities, while a great deal of money and time are spent for propaganda purposes which should have been unnecessary had most of the courses been community oriented or 'community' desired courses. However, with generous grants and/or donations different programs could be planned for. Since the Center was expected to be self-financed,

the results of the course in the Center in terms of money and time spent have been rather encouraging according to the impact of changes on society as given in the different testimonies of participating students.

C. Program Evaluation:

Even though the programs had achievable objectives but because they were not job-oriented or problem solving or community oriented, they were not practical in the sense that they were not community problem-solving the clienteles were not involved in prog-grmming, not in planning, hence a lot devolved on the perceptions of the staff of the Center whereas the work of the Center could have been made more interesting and more innovating had these responsibilities been shared with the clienteles-at least, with a cross-section of them.

D. Staff and Administration:

The members of staff employed in the administrative section were, no doubt, equal to the task but not so much can be said of the teaching staff who were mainly university faculty members whose methodology of teaching and/or conducting courses for adults would be similar to methods used in teaching undergraduates. As shared with the Associate Director, some of them were not equal to their tasks in the sense that they did not know how to handle or teach adults. There have been no formal training in adult teaching for some of the teaching staff either before or during the teaching periods; the only thing being done for them, according to Drs. Smith

and Brahce, was to visit the classes and talk over with teaching staff from time to time. Thus, the administrative staff have been bearing quite a big load in respect to staff supervision.

On the whole, the Center have achieved some measures of success bearing in mind the limitation of lack of regular funding for the courses. For instance, in 1969, 2,473 students enrolled in 122 courses. A detailed study of course enrollements for 1969/70 session revealed an average of between 21 and 25 students ranging from 17 to 23 hours. UCAE has offered sequential instruction in several fields and issued certificates of completion in all of the courses including: Industrial Engineering, Personnel Management, Food Service, Building and Construction, Retail Services, Administrative services and Behavioral Sciences. Close to 40,000 enrollments were recorded in UCAE courses at Detroit, Ann Arbor, Southfield, Dearborn and Grosse Point.

VII. Conclusion-Findings & Recommendations:

While the UCAE has achieved quite a great deal of success in most of the courses offered or undertaken, bearing in mind limitations of finance, the Center has failed somewhat in not directing much of its energy to arranging courses which are job-oriented or problem-solving courses, such as courses on Curbing Detroit's crimes-by giving more attention to people at the lower echelon of the population. The Center can achieve a great deal of success if, through its research section, it can come up with courses relating to

crime curbing, task-related courses and present such findings to the City officials of Detroit and/or to the State Legislature for funding, knowing that such courses are the results of public opinions. As in most universities, a great deal of energy is expended on the upper or middle echelons of the population, whereas a lot of world's problems usually emerge from the lower echelons of populations whose lots have been relegated to the background.

Secondly, [redacted] a one or two days' orientation program be planned for teachers of adults before or during the course of their involvement in adult learning or teaching. A few hours of such orientation would save a great deal of administrative staff's time and energy in daily or weekly supervision.

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